

# Public Panel Discussion

## Kindness versus Shame: Why emotions matter in politics and policy

Notions of kindness, compassion and manaakitanga have become a feature of New Zealand political discourse over the past three years. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has been a champion of this approach, discarding the oft-used language of blame and shame. Some find it refreshing in that it signals a different way of designing and delivering policy change. Some are not so sure, with questions remaining over how kind words translate into government action. Others continue to believe the ideal world of politics and public policy should be wholly rational, that rational economic actors and processes are the ideal, while emotions represent an anathema to good governance. Yet, researchers, activists and party strategists all recognise that emotion is central to political discussion, public opinion, political tolerance and attitudes to public policy. So can we imagine a society where emotions such as kindness tangibly inform the work of government, the private sector, and ultimately deliver a more humane capitalist economy?

### Featuring:

Professor Michael Orsini (University of Ottawa), Chlöe Swarbrick (Green Party MP), Helen Robinson (Auckland City Mission), Mark Powell (University of Auckland)

**Monday 9 March**  
**5.30pm**

**General Library, Room B10**

Brought to you by the Agencies of Kindness Research Hub and the Public Policy Institute

